

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

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Binational Safety Initiative Gains Momentum

U.S. and Mexico Combine Efforts to Make Borders Safe

El Centro, Calif.-- The El Centro Border Patrol Sector today completed the first of several binational search and rescue training courses hosted along the southwest border. Nine Mexican law enforcement personnel from Grupo Beta, PGR Officers, Mexicali Fire Department, and Mexicali Municipal Police, completed the four-week search and rescue course. The Border Patrol Search Trauma and Rescue (BORSTAR) team, a specialized search and rescue unit, conducted the training.

“We have established strong and mutually beneficial working relationships with our Mexican counterparts,” said El Centro Sector Chief Patrol Agent Kenneth R. Stitt. “Joint training helps to further those relationships.”

This year, an estimated 500 Mexican law enforcement and emergency response personnel will receive training in disciplines such as swift water rescue, first responder medical training, search and rescue, desert navigation and All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) operations. In addition to the training, the personnel will receive search and rescue equipment.

The Border Patrol first initiated binational training in 1998 through the Border Safety Initiative (BSI) and has trained over 1,100 Mexican officials. The course also assists the development of joint operation protocols and augments the response capabilities of both nations both collectively and independently.

The training is in conjunction with the Smart Border Accord (22 Point Plan) signed by government officials from the United States and Mexico in support of the Partnership Action Plan. This type of training builds on the longstanding public safety and humanitarian measures practiced by the Border Patrol.

Over the past several years, unscrupulous alien smugglers have moved migrants into more remote areas with dangerous terrain and extreme conditions. In particular, the BSI is intended to inform potential migrants of the hazards of crossing the border illegally and to respond to those who are in a life-threatening situation. The binational training efforts facilitate a rapid response to these dangerous situations and create a coordinated, unilateral methodology for medical care.

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